

Hope is a Part of Salvation



Part 4/5

Hope
By Derek Prince

In each of my previous introductions to this series, I have briefly shared about my personal battle with hopelessness. Even though I was a mature Christian and Bible teacher, I was not immune to this kind of suffering. It comes as no surprise that many Christians find themselves in the same desperate struggle today.

Hopelessness is one of the saddest conditions in human experience, but I believe it is possible to experience genuine, biblical hope. Why? Because hope is part of our salvation in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit! From the Scriptures and from my own experience, I will be sharing with you on this topic in this fourth letter of our 5-part series on Hope.

Seven Essential Truths

Let's begin this edition by briefly summarizing the seven scriptural facts we established in our previous discussions on this theme. First of all, there are three abiding spiritual realities in the Christian life: faith, hope and love. Each is essential for effective Christian living. Second, hope is produced by the new birth; we are born again into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The third fact is expressed by the statement, "Hope is based on Christ's resurrection." Fourth, hope looks forward to Christ's return. This is the blessed hope that is set before all true Christians. Fifth, the source of hope is God's love. Sixth, biblical hope motivates us to holy living. Seventh, this kind of hope produces confident, radiant Christians.

These truths are extremely important, so I will list them again for review:

1. There are three abiding realities in the Christian life: faith, hope and love.
2. Hope is produced by the new birth.
3. Hope is based on Christ's resurrection.
4. Hope looks forward to Christ's return.
5. The source of hope is God's love.
6. Hope motivates us to holy living.
7. Hope produces confident, radiant Christians.

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A Surprising Truth

In this message, I will explain why hope is an essential part of salvation. Most Christians with a denominational background have some kind of awareness that you cannot have salvation without faith. We are all familiar with the famous scriptural statement, “The just shall live by faith.” That is perfectly true. However, it may come as a surprise to you that it is not the whole truth. What I want to emphasize in this lesson is that you can not have salvation without hope as well. Hope is also an essential part of salvation.

Here is what Paul says in Romans 8, verses 24 and 25:

> For in hope we have been saved [or, by hope we have been saved], but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. (nasb)

This verse reminds us of an important point made earlier in this series concerning the relationship between faith and hope. Faith is in the present, but hope turns toward the future. Here Paul is saying, “In hope [or by hope] we have been saved.” In other words, hope does not take the place of faith—but it is an essential part of being saved. Without hope we do not have valid salvation.

Paul goes on to point out that hope produces perseverance. He says, “If we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.” Perseverance is also an essential part of our salvation. Many passages of Scripture emphasize that we must persevere in our faith until the consummation of that faith. So, hope (and with it, perseverance) is essential to salvation.

A Mystery Disclosed

This truth—that hope is essential to salvation—is clarified by Paul in another passage of his writings. I consider Colossians 1:25–27 to be one of the most beautiful and exciting passages of the New Testament. And believe me, there are a lot of beautiful and exciting passages in the New Testament! This is what Paul says:

> I have become its servant [the servant of the church] by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness —the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people [the saints]. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (niv)

Let’s repeat that last verse again for emphasis:

> To them [the saints of God] God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

In this passage, Paul is telling us that he was commissioned by God to present to His people (the church) the Word of God in its fullness. He then goes on to explain what the fullness of the Word of God means. Paul says that the full presentation of the truth of God’s Word involves a “mystery” which “has been kept hidden for ages and generations.”

At the time of the New Testament, the Greek word “mystery” had a special meaning. There were certain “mystery religions” into which people were initiated through secret rites. Only people who had been through the secret rites and initiation would be allowed to enter into these religions. So, Paul’s use of the word “mystery” does not mean something which can never be understood. More exactly, it means something which can be understood only by the initiated—those who have met the condition for entering into this understanding.

By using this term, Paul is revealing that the Christian faith contains a mystery—something that has been kept hidden for ages and generations. All the great men of old, all the philosophers, all the wise men, all the kings and conquerors never knew this mystery. It was reserved for us in this present age. Paul says that what has been hidden is now disclosed to the saints. Doesn’t that make you feel excited? Are we not privileged to be among those to whom this mystery—which was never before revealed, even to the wisest of men—is now disclosed?

Three Short Words: "Christ in You"

God wants “to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery.” More literally in Greek, “The riches of the glory of this mystery.” Paul almost runs out of words trying to explain how exciting this mystery is. What is the mystery?

The answer to this question is not presented in some great philosophical treatise with long, complicated words that most people can't understand. I was a professional philosopher, so I especially appreciate the simplicity of the Scriptures. I remember reading the works of the philosopher Emmanuel Kant, where one sentence would sometimes extend for two pages without a period. Thankfully, that is not the way the Bible reveals mysteries. The glorious mystery we are seeking is revealed in "three short words".

What is the mystery? "Christ in you". That is the most exciting truth that can ever be revealed to humanity! That through the Holy Spirit, Christ, the eternal Son of God, can be in us. In us as individuals; among us as the people of God. This is the hope of glory.

What is the hope of glory? Christ in you. Christ in me. This is the secret—the mystery which God has reserved for us. Don't you feel privileged? Don't you get excited when you think about that? Are you able to realize what it means to have Christ in you? It means you have the hope of glory.

Only Two Possibilities

What about those who do not have Christ in them? It is quite a contrast to what this glorious mystery means to us as believers. Let's look at Paul's vivid description of the condition of those who are outside of Christ. In Ephesians 2:11–12 (niv), writing to those who are Gentiles, Paul reminds them not to forget what life was like without Christ:

> Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

Please pay close attention to that awful list of negatives. What cruel words they are! "Separate from Christ; excluded from citizenship in Israel; foreigners to the covenants of the promise." (Have you ever lived as a foreigner in a land that was not yours? I have, and I know what it is like to be a foreigner. You don't really belong. That is what Paul is saying about those who are without Christ—they are foreigners; they don't belong.) But the last two phrases I think are the most tragic: "without hope and without God."

Allow me to repeat those phrases. I want to burn them into your thinking. Maybe you are in this category—in the condition they describe. If so, you need to pay attention to them all the more carefully.

Separate from Christ

Excluded from citizenship in Israel

Foreigners to the covenants of the promise

Without hope, and ...

Without God in the world

For every person, there are just two possible conditions to be in. If you have Christ in you, you have the hope of glory. But if you are without Christ, then you are without hope and without God.

The Necessity of Hope

Now we can see why it is so critical to know that *hope is a part of our salvation*! Without hope, we don't have Christ. Without Christ, we don't have salvation.

Hope is not just an appendage to salvation. It is an essential part of salvation. We are saved in hope; we are saved by hope. Hope is built on the faith that brings salvation—but it is an essential part of the total package. If we don't have this hope, then we are without Christ. And if we are without Christ, we are without God. We are foreigners. We are excluded. We are separate. We are hopeless. What a terrible condition to be in!

Thanks be to God—it is not necessary for anyone who hears this message to remain in that condition. If you will turn your life over to God and receive Christ, then you will not be without Christ. Then you will very quickly know what it means to have in you the hope of glory. May the Lord help each one of us to be sure about our salvation.

What about you? As you have been reading these words, does it produce a desire in you to confirm that you have Christ in you? Do you want to experience this "hope of glory" we have been talking about?

It may be that you have not yet made the decision to receive Jesus Christ and the hope He brings. Or, you may have made that decision, but you would like to confirm it and receive the hope that Jesus promises.

Whatever your situation, you can come with certainty into this mysterious, glorious hope by praying the following words.

Dear Lord Jesus, I want to receive You fully into my life right now. Come into me, and flood my entire being with Your hope—the hope of glory. I open my heart to You now—more fully than I ever have before. Thank You that You have come into me—making it so that I will never again be without hope and without God in the world. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Teaching Letter
Transcript: TL-L117-100-ENG
Last Updated: 05 Nov 2026
Website: Derekprince.com/en/resources



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